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ADDRESS,

DELIVERED AT

BETHEL CHURCH,

PHILADELPHIA;

ON THE 30th OF SEPTEMBER, 1818.

BEFORE THE

PENNSYLVANIA

AUGUSTINE SOCIETY,

For the Education of People of Colour.

BY PRINCE SAUNDERS.

TO WHICH IS ANNEXED

The Constitution of the Society.

PHILADELPHIA;

PRINTED BY JOSEPH RAKESTRAW.

1818.

MR. P. SAUNDERS,

SIR,

PERMIT us, in the name of the Pennsylvania Augustine Education Society, to tender you our grateful thanks, for the eloquent and appropriate discourse, delivered before them on Wednesday evening, September 30th. Allow us to solicit a copy for publication.

JOHN SUMMERSSETT, }
JOSEPH CASSEY, and }
RUSSELL PARROTT, } Committee of Arrangement.

Philad. Oct. 1, 1818.



Gentlemen of the Committee of Arrangement, of the Pennsylvania Augustine Education Society.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

SINCE it is to your Society's care, that the intellectual, social, moral and political improvements of the rising generation of the people of our complexion are committed; if in your opinion, my Address will be of any service, in the promotion of these invaluable objects, you have my hearty consent for its publication.

I have the honour to be,
my dear Sirs,

your very humble and obedient Servant,
PRINCE SAUNDERS.

*To Mess'rs John Summersett,
Joseph Cassey, and
Russell Parrott.*

AN ADDRESS, &c.

THE human heart is a parti-coloured piece of Mosaic. But notwithstanding its variegated appearances, the whitened inlayings of those genuine excellencies, and of those ennobling affections, which encompass humanity with glory and honour, are but seldom to be found its innate, or, as it were, its spontaneous ornaments.

We hence descry some of the grounds for that invaluable importance which has uniformly been given to education, in supplying the mind with intellectual acquisitions, and for adorning it with those elevated accomplishments which have generally been considered as its peculiar fruits, by the virtuous and contemplative of every age and nation; where the genial influences of the Sun of Science have been experienced, and where the blessings of civilized society have been enjoyed. If by investigating the historic page of antiquity, we take a retrospective view of the numerous votaries of literature and the useful arts, who flourished at those early periods, when the improving influences of knowledge and civilization were wholly confined to the oriental regions, we shall then discover some traces of their views of the intrinsic utility of mutually associating, to aid the progress of those who were aspiring to taste the Castilian spring,

while ascending the towering heights of Parnassus, that there they might behold the magnificent temple of the Ruler of the Muses, and hear his venerated oracle.

We have heard of the early distinguishing attainments of the celebrated Aristotle, who improved so much at seventeen years of age, that the immortal Plato, (his preceptor,) gave him the appellation of a Lover of the Truth. He soon afterwards became tutor to Alexander the great, and founder of the sublime researches of the ancient Peripotetici. The accomplished and eloquent youth, Antonius Gripho, a native Gaul, came to Rome, and taught rhetoric and oratory at the house of Julius Cæsar, when a mere boy. And historians tell us, that his school was frequented by Cicero and others of the most eminent literati of the age.

Many, in different periods, by cultivating the arts and sciences, have contributed to human happiness and improvement, by that invincible zeal for moral virtue and intellectual excellence, which their example has inspired in other minds and hearts, as well as by the sublimity of those traces of truth with which they have illumined the world, and dignified the intercourse of civilized society.

Perhaps there never was a period, when the attention of so many enlightened men was so vigorously awakened to a sense of the importance of a universal dissemination of the blessings of instruction, as at this enlightened age, in this, in the northern and eastern sections of our country, in some portions of Europe, and in the island of Hayti.

The hope is encouraged, that in the above-mentioned portions of the world, the means of acquiring knowledge sufficient to read and understand the sacred Scriptures, and to manage with propriety, the ordinary concerns of domestic and social life, will soon be within the reach of every individual. Then, we trust, that we shall see a practical exemplification of the beauty and excellence of those celestial precepts and commandments which came from heaven, and which are equally applicable to all descriptions of men. They address themselves to the king upon the throne ; they visit the obscurity of the humblest dwelling ; they call upon the poor man to cultivate every good principle of action, as well as the man of a more elevated rank, and to aim at a life of purity, innocence, elevated virtue, and moral excellence, with the assurance that he too, shall reap his reward in that better scene of human destination, to which Christianity has called all those who fear God and work righteousness.

Wherever these lofty and commanding views of piety and virtue have been encouraged, a high sense of the social, moral, and practical obligations and duties of life, have been cherished and cultivated with an elevated and an invincible zeal.

Under the influence of this spirit, this benevolent spirit, practical Christians, of every denomination, have elevated their views far beyond the circumscribed boundaries of selfishness, sectarianism, and party zeal ; and, being bound together by the indissoluble links of that golden chain of charity and kind affection, with which Christianity invariably connects its

sincere votaries, and standing upon the common ground of Christian equality, they encircle the great community of those who profess the religion of our divine Master, in the arms of their charity and love, and become co-workers and fellow-labourers in the illumination, the improvement, and the ultimate felicity of those who will, undoubtedly, eventually belong to the commonwealth of the Israel of our God.

In such improved sections of the world, the gardens of the Academy are thronged with youth, whose ardour to reap its fairest flowers, would even vie with that evinced by the hazardous enterprize of the intrepid Jason of antiquity, when he cast the watchful Dragon, and seized that invaluable prize, the Golden Fleece.

We have reason to be grateful, my friends, that it has pleased God to permit us to witness a period when those unjust prejudices, and those hitherto insuperable barriers to the instruction, and, consequently, to the intellectual, the moral, and the religious improvement and elevation of the people of colour, under which our fathers groaned, are beginning to subside.

And now, in the true spirit of the religion of that beneficent Parent, who has made of one blood all nations of men who dwell upon the face of the whole earth, many persons of different regions and various nations, have been led to the contemplation of the interesting relations in which the human race stand to each other. They have seen that man, as a solitary individual, is a very wretched being. As long as he stands detached from his kind, he is possessed

neither of happiness nor of strength. We are formed by nature to unite; we are impelled towards each other by the benevolent instincts in our frames; we are linked by a thousand connexions, founded on common wants.

Benevolent affection therefore, or, as it is very properly termed, humanity, is what man, as such, in every station, owes to man. To be inaccessible, contemptuous, avaricious, and hard hearted, is to revolt against our very reason and nature; it is, according to the language of inspiration, to "hide ourselves from our own flesh."

The genuine kind affections, and the elevated sensibilities of Christianity, as they are exhibited to us in the conduct and character of our blessed Saviour, during his residence in this scene of our pilgrimage, are suited to call forth into vigorous exercise, the best sentiments, feelings and dispositions of the human heart; while they disclose to the admiring view of his obedient followers, those indissoluble and ennobling moral ties, which connect earth with heaven, and which assimilate man to the benevolent Author of his being.

Wherever Christianity is considered as a religion of the affections, every well instructed, practical Christian, habitually aspires at an entire imitation of the example, and to yield a cheerful and unreserved obedience to the precepts and instructions of its heavenly founder. So peculiar is the adaptation of Christianity to become a universal religion; for wherever its spirit enters into the councils of nations, we find it unbinding the chains of corporeal and

mental captivity, and diffusing over the whole world, the maxims of impartial justice, and of enlightened benevolence.

Such, and so sublimely excellent, are the fruits of a spirit of Christian charity and practical beneficence; for to it alone the glory is due, of having placed the weak under the protection of their stronger brethren; for she unceasingly labours to improve all the varying circumstances and conditions of mankind: so that, among those who profess her true spirit, the love of our neighbour is not an inactive principle, but it is real beneficence; and they, like the good Samaritan in the gospel, evince their sincerity by ministering to the necessities, and in labouring for the welfare, improvement and happiness of mankind.

Mess'rs Vice-Presidents, and Gentlemen of the Pennsylvania Augustine Education Society.

ALTHOUGH the seat of your respected President is vacant on this interesting occasion, on account of the severe indisposition with which he is visited, still we trust that his heart is with you, and that you have his best wishes and his prayers, for the prosperity of this excellent establishment. The hope is encouraged, that you will never be weary in labouring for the promotion of the cause and interests of science and literature among the rising generation of the people of colour. For upon their intellectual, moral and religious improvements, depend the future elevation of their standing, in the social, civil and ecclesiastical community. Surely then, my

friends, you are associated for the most laudable, interesting, and invaluable purposes.

Therefore, let it be the unceasing labour, the undeviating and the inflexibly firm purpose of the members of this Association, individually and collectively, to inspire all within the sphere of their influence, with a sense of the value and importance of giving their children a good education. Hear the words of revelation, calling upon you who profess to be Christians, to "train up your children in the way they should go," and to "bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." And if you believe this high authority, how can you be excused, if you neglect to give them the means of acquiring a knowledge of their duty to that divine instructor who came to call them to glory, to virtue, and to immortality.

Permit me again to entreat you, duly to appreciate the importance of religiously educating your children. For, a Christian education is not only of great utility while sojourning in this scene of discipline and probation, but it is more transcendently excellent in that more elevated scene of human destination to which we are hastening. For even the ruthless hand of death itself, cannot disrobe the soul of those virtuous principles, which are sometimes acquired through the medium of a virtuous education, and "which, when transplanted to the skies, in heaven's immortal garden bloom."

CONSTITUTION.

WE the Subscribers, persons of colour of the city of Philadelphia, in the State of Pennsylvania, sensibly impressed with the high importance of education, towards the improvement of our species, in an individual as well as a social capacity ; and fully persuaded, that it is to the prominently defective system of instruction, as it now exists among us, that we must in a great measure attribute the contemptible and degraded station which we occupy in society, and most of the disadvantages under which we suffer ; and viewing, with serious concern, the formidable barriers that prejudices, powerful as they are unjust, have reared to impede our progress in the paths of science and of virtue, rendering 't almost impossible to obtain for our offspring such instruction as we deem essentially necessary to qualify them for the useful walks of society : We therefore are convinced, that it is an unquestionable duty which we owe to ourselves, to our posterity, and to our God, who has endued us with intellectual powers, to use the best energies of our minds and of our hearts, in devising and adapting the most effectual means to procure for our children a more extensive and useful education than we have heretofore had in our power to effect ; and now, confidently relying upon the zealous and unanimous support of our coloured brethren, under the protection of divine providence, have resolved to unite and form ourselves into a society, to be known by the name of "**THE AUGUSTINE EDUCATION SOCIETY OF PENNSYLVANIA,**" for the establishment and maintenance of a Seminary, in which children of colour shall be taught all the useful and scientific branches of education, as far as may be found practicable, under the following regulations :—

ARTICLE I.

THE persons associated by subscribing to this Constitution, shall be known by the name of "**THE AUGUSTINE EDUCATION SOCIETY OF PENNSYLVANIA.**"

ARTICLE II.

Every person that shall subscribe, and pay one dollar to the Society, and a further sum of twenty-five cents, at each of the quarterly meetings, for the support of the said Seminary, shall be a member of the Institution, and entitled to all its privileges and immunities.

ARTICLE III.

The quarterly meetings of the Society shall be held on the first Mondays of April, July, October and January.

ARTICLE IV.

At the January meeting of the Society, there shall be elected by the members present, twenty managers, five of whom shall be men of science.

ARTICLE V.

Within five days after their election, the managers shall be convened by the persons whose names shall be first on the list, and shall proceed to elect from their number, a President, two Vice-Presidents, a Treasurer, a Secretary, a Committee of superintendence, to consist of five persons, and a Committee of finance, to consist of ten.

ARTICLE VI.

After the first meeting of the managers, they shall meet upon their own adjournment, and at the call of the President, or in his absence, the two Vice-Presidents.

ARTICLE VII.

It shall be the object of the Society, to originate and maintain a Seminary, in which children of colour shall be taught, so far as practicable, the arts and sciences.

ARTICLE VIII.

The committee of superintendence shall appoint, with the concurrence of the rest of the managers, one or more teachers in the Seminary, as the state of the funds shall permit; and after the appointment of the teacher or teachers, they shall be under the directions of the committee of superintendence.

ARTICLE IX.

The Treasurer shall keep clear and correct accounts of the receipts and expenditures, and shall pay all orders drawn upon him,

when signed by the President, or in his absence, one of the Vice-Presidents ; he shall submit his accounts to the inspection of the board of managers, when called for by them ; he shall give to the board of managers such security as a majority of them may deem proper, and his security shall cause to be delivered over to the managers, in case of his death, resignation, or forfeiture of office by improper behaviour, all books, vouchers and documents appertaining to the business of the Society.

ARTICLE X.

The Secretary shall record, in a book, all the transactions of the Society and of the managers.

ARTICLE XI.

Any religious, auxiliary, or civil Society, who shall contribute 10 dollars annually, in aid of the funds of this Society, shall have the privilege of appointing a manager.

ARTICLE XII.

All monies that may be subscribed, either as donations or subscriptions, shall, in the event of the objects of the Society, not being carried into operation, be returned to the respective subscribers, the whole amount of donations in the first instance, and the balance, shall be divided among the annual subscribers, or members, after the incidental expenses incurred in attempting to promote the views of the Society shall have been defrayed.

Rev. John Gloucester, President.

James Forten, First Vice-President.

Rev. Jacob Tapsico, Second Do.

Robert Douglass, Treasurer.

Samuel Cornish, Secretary.

Committee of Finance.

Robert C. Gordon.

Russell Parrott.

John Summersett.

John G. Paul.

Joseph Cassey.

John Morris.

James Wilson.

Francis Webb.

Jeffry Buley.

Quamino Clarkson, Sec'y.